



REPORT: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

School District U-46
EDUCATIONAL FACILITY MASTER PLAN
February 1, 2020

DESIGNING OUR FUTURE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why this report?

To focus on the connections between educational systems and broader community conditions in School District U-46.

Most of the Educational Facility Master Plan (EFMP) process focuses on what's happening in and around a school: facility conditions, teaching and learning environments, school programs, and student experience to name a few. But when students, teachers, or staff are in a classroom, their experiences are also affected by factors beyond school walls.

To truly understand the varied experiences of communities across SD U-46, the DLR Group team expanded beyond school walls to investigate the broader role that schools can play in community health. This exploration included identifying factors beyond U-46 schools that might influence a user's ability to receive an equitable experience or make them more vulnerable to an inadequate school facility.

What's the process?

A community exploration grounded in both data and the human experience.

A district as complex as SD U-46 required a multi-faceted process. The DLR Group planning team combined **spatial data analysis**, a **community survey**, and a **community visioning workshop** to gain a more holistic understanding of District conditions.



SPATIAL DATA ANALYSIS

Using GIS data to understand community conditions across U-46



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

Community workshop investigating the broader role schools can play in community health



COMMUNITY SURVEY

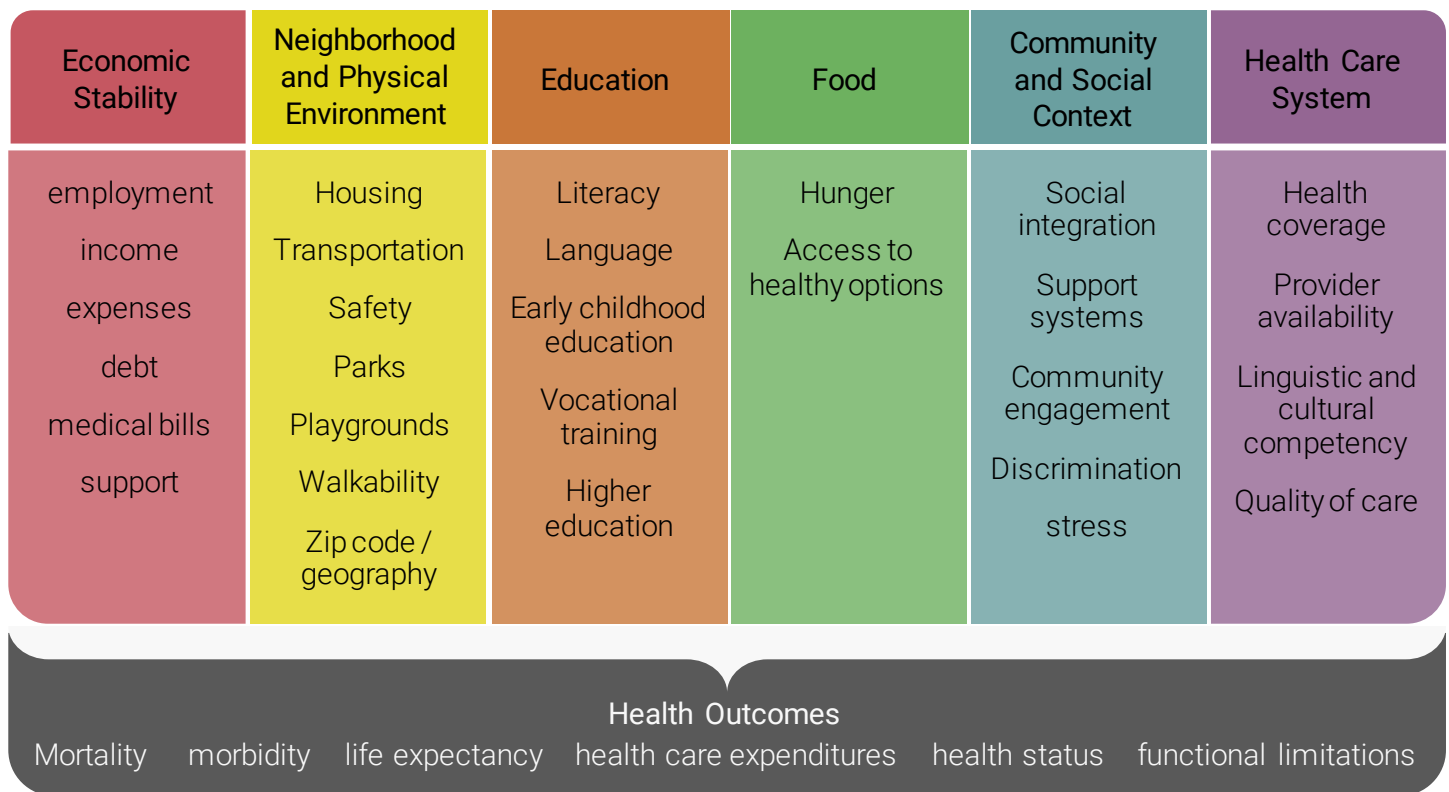
Survey asking community members about their district and neighborhood experiences

Defining Healthy Communities

What are the social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health are the “conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that shape health.” (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018)

Developed by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the social determinants of health provide a research-based framework for understanding the many social and environmental factors that shape an individual or community’s health. Addressing the social determinants of health is a key part of achieving health equity.



Why should we apply this framework?

Communities need access to a balanced set of resources to thrive and achieve a high quality of life. Design gives us the opportunity to provide these resources and support community health.

Thinking about communities holistically through the lens of the Social Determinants of Health helps each project achieve social sustainability - actively supporting the capacity of systems and infrastructure of current and future generations to create healthy and livable communities.

How can School District U-46 play a role in community health?

Schools directly control educational systems, and they can positively influence other social determinants of health.

Beyond education, schools can influence other social determinants of health, including community and social support systems, food access, and healthcare access. Through the development of this EFMP, there is an opportunity to explore how schools can embrace a broader and more active role in supporting community health.

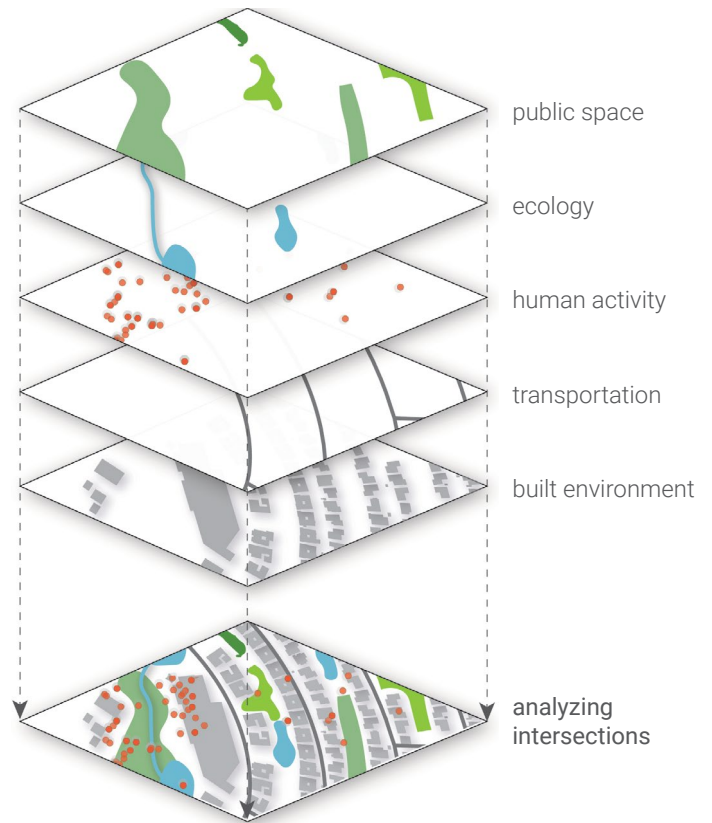
Geospatial Analysis

What is GIS?

Geographic Information Systems is a framework for gathering, analyzing, and mapping spatial data in 2D and 3D.

Spatial data is any data that is associated with its location. This can include information like demographics, roadways, ecology, buildings, and human activity. GIS organizes spatial data to help identify patterns, relationships, and trends across space that can inform decisions. In a district that crosses 11 communities and 3 counties, GIS allows us to compare layers of data across geographies.

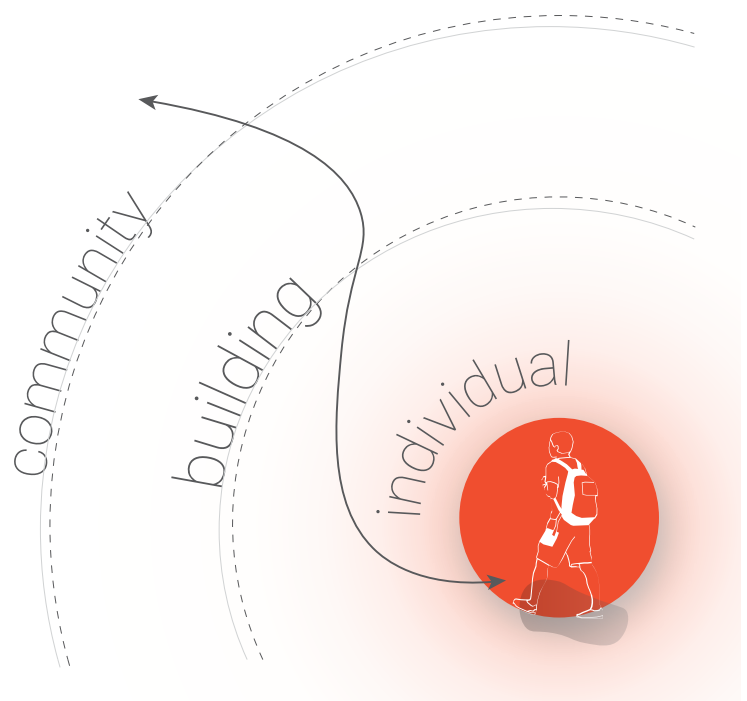
This process helps us ask the right planning questions and identify the right problems to solve.



Schools, Scales, and Healthy Communities

When we expand our thinking beyond a school building to consider the role our school plays in the broader community, we can solve broader problems through design.

GIS provides us with a tool to think about complex problems across scales. When we think about a problem from the individual scale, the building scale, and the neighborhood scale, we can understand the many factors that can be influenced to affect positive change.



Geospatial Analysis

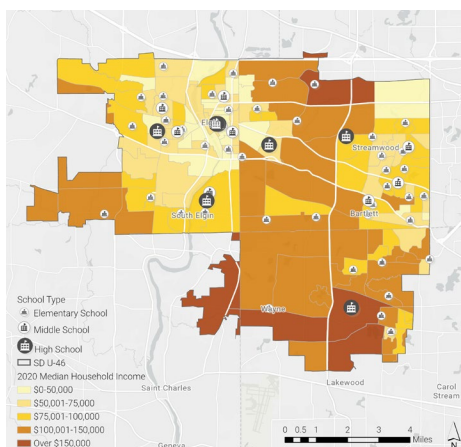
What did we analyze?

From the beginning of the planning process, it was clear that such a large district would have variation across its many communities. GIS analysis helped the planning team understand the ways in which the 11 communities across SD U-46 compare. The team examined both physical resource availability and demographic factors that could affect someone’s ability to access these resources.

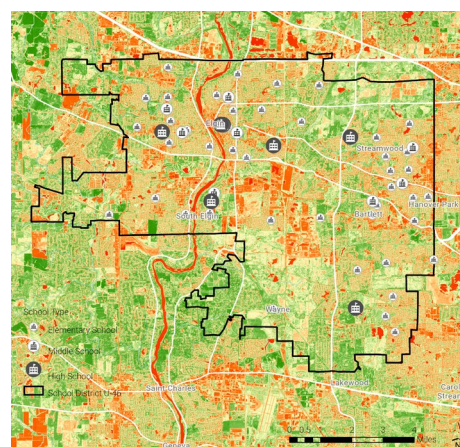
Analysis factors spanned across the Social Determinants of Health to provide a more holistic understanding of community conditions beyond schools, and how schools can help communities thrive. The table below outlines the physical resources and demographic factors analyzed across SD U-46.

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs Businesses <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Median household income Households below poverty level Unemployment rate 	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks & open space Transportation Rented vs. owned housing <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent-burdened households Household access to vehicle 	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education institutions <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational attainment 	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grocery stores <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households on food stamps / SNAP 	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries Community & rec centers <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total population Race/ethnicity Age distribution 	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitals & clinics Mental health facilities <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with 1+ member with disability

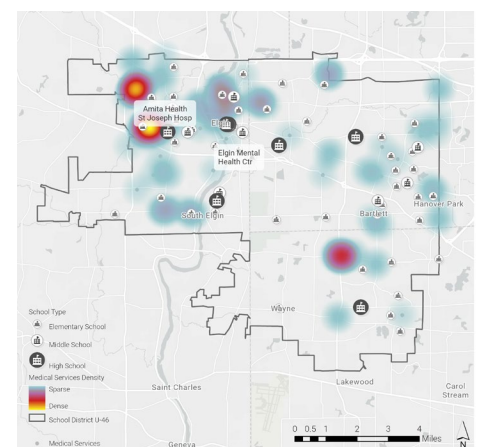
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



PARKS & OPEN SPACE



HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Community Survey

Why this survey?

To ask community members about their experiences in U-46 schools and their communities as a whole.

What did the survey ask?

The survey was organized into three main sections:

Demographics - the survey asked respondents about their relationship to School District U-46, where they live and work within the District, and their backgrounds.

District experience - the survey asked respondents about their overall experience in the District, including questions about programs and services offered, District perceptions, and communication methods.

Community experience - the survey asked respondents about the resources available in their communities, including strengths, challenges, and the types of services needed.

How was the survey distributed?

The survey was promoted and distributed through a wide variety of channels over the span of 3 weeks in both English and Spanish.



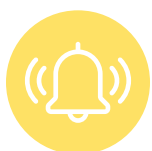
Email



Text



U-46 newsletter



Alert to U-46 app



Facebook post



Message in Superintendent's Weekly

Key Survey Facts

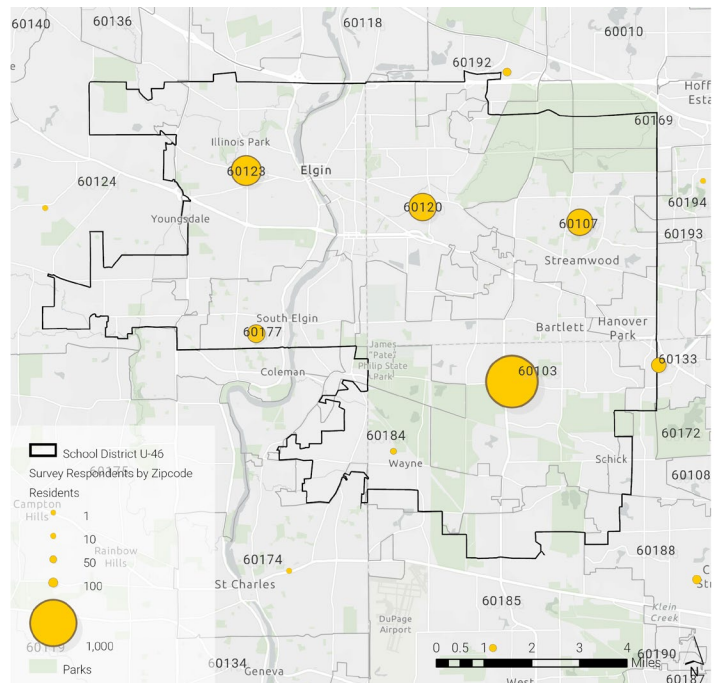
5,341 respondents

24 questions

5 languages

(English, Spanish, Gujarati, Urdu, Polish)

3 week survey window



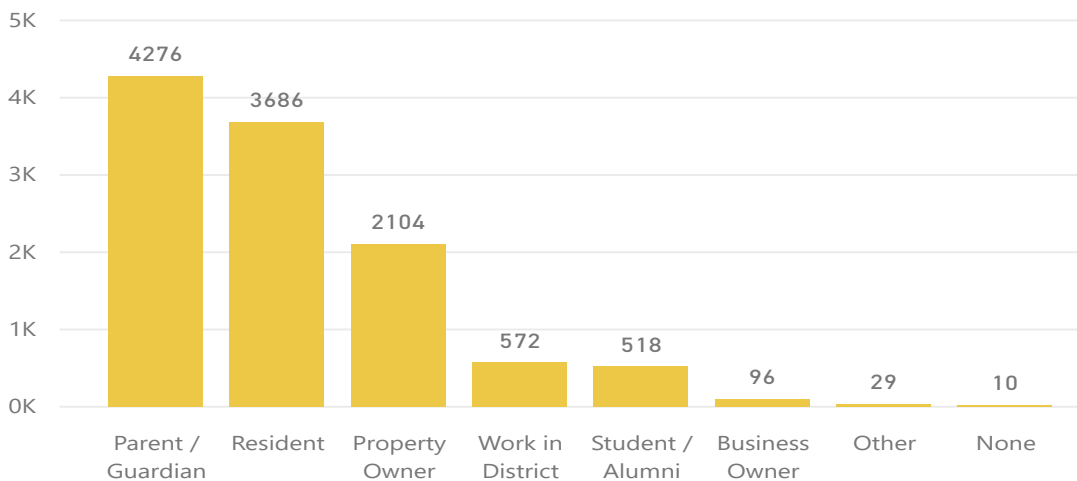
Survey respondents by zip code of residence

Community Survey

Demographics: who responded?

RELATIONSHIP TO DISTRICT

The majority of respondents were parents / guardians and residents of the District.



*note: respondents were allowed to select multiple options

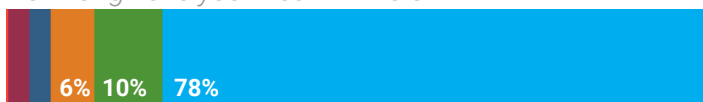
RESIDENCY IN STATE & DISTRICT

Respondents have lived in SD U-46 for varying durations, and the majority of respondents have lived in the State of Illinois for over 20 years.

How long have you lived in SD U-46?



How long have you lived in Illinois?



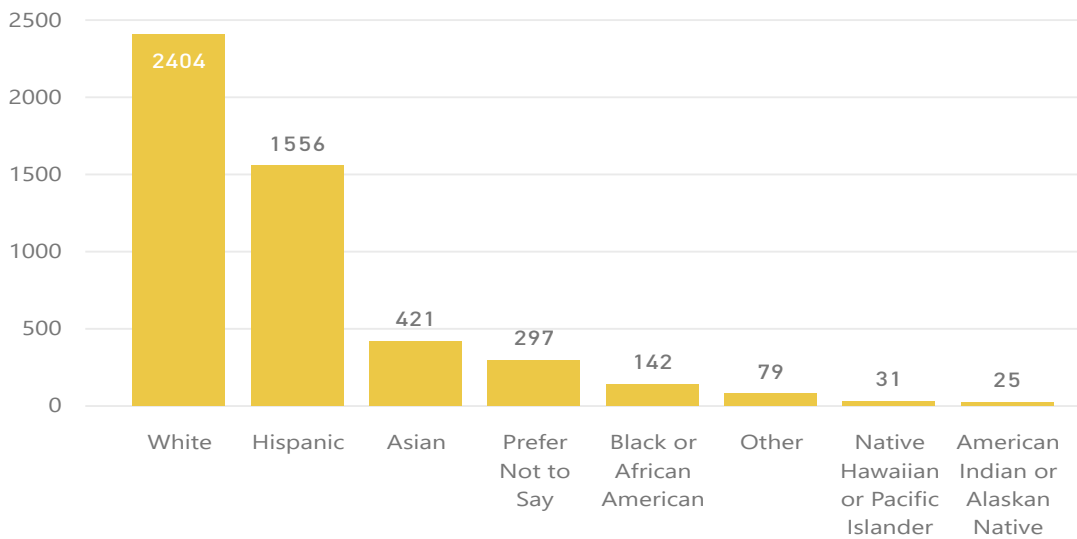
- < 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- Over 20 years

Community Survey

Demographics: who responded?

RACE / ETHNICITY

Respondents were predominantly white and Hispanic, and people of many racial / ethnic backgrounds responded.

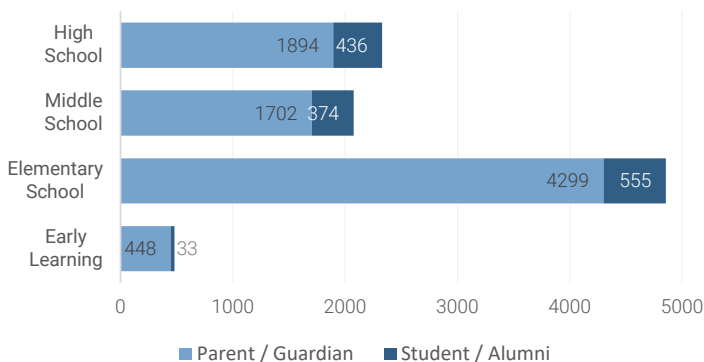


*note: respondents were allowed to select multiple options

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

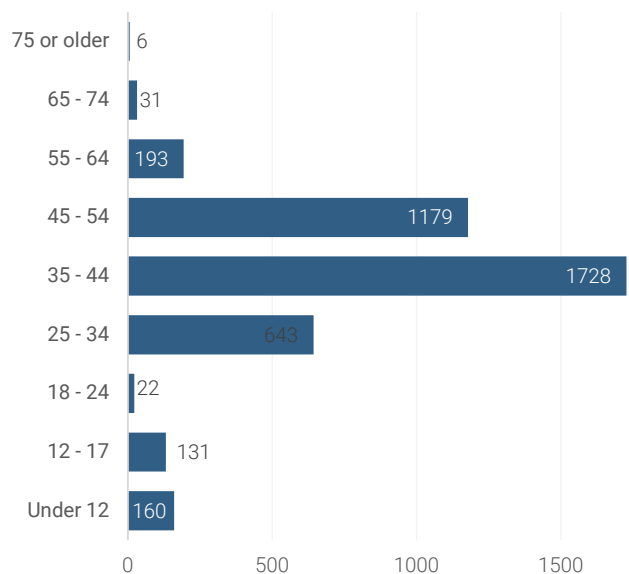
While students and alumni were most commonly from Elgin, Larkin, and Streamwood, all high schools except the Central School Programs were represented in the student / alumni survey population.

Parents from all schools responded to the survey, with the highest number of parents with children attending South Elgin, Bartlett, and Kenyon Woods.



AGE

While the majority of respondents were between 35-54, people of all age groups responded to the survey.



Community Survey

District Experience

This section outlines respondents' overall experience in the District, including questions about programs and services offered, District perceptions, and communication methods.

CLASS SIZES

51% of respondents felt that the student to teacher ratio was too high.

COMMUNICATION

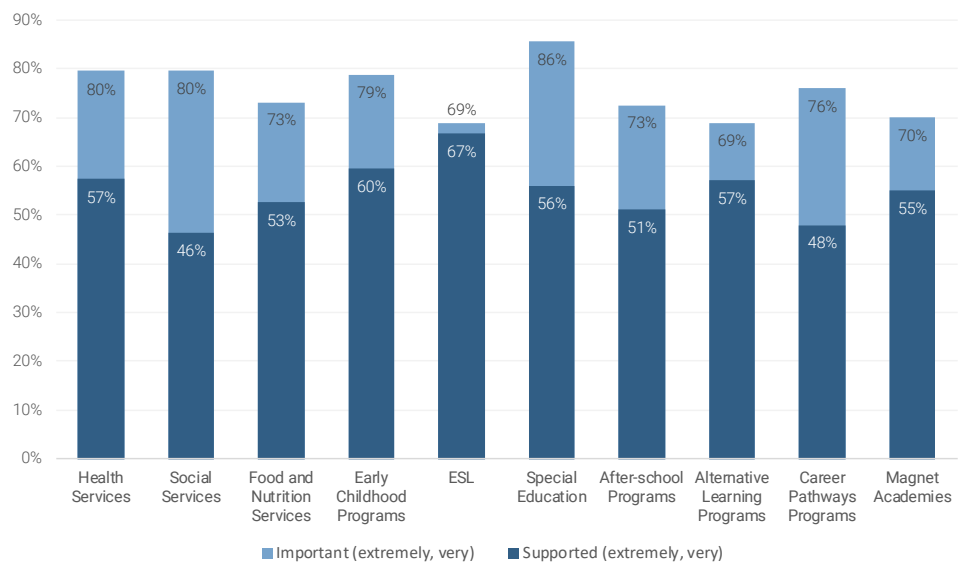
Respondents most commonly receive communication from the District via text, phone calls, and e-newsletter.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Respondents indicated that all programs provided by SD U-46 were either very or extremely important. However, they felt that all of the programs were under-supported by the District.

Social services, special education, and career pathways programs showed the greatest gap between importance and perceived District support.

U-46 Programs and Services



“ More counseling and advice for students....
 Improved equal opportunities for all students including special needs.....
 Build student careers to help them prepare for the competitive world.... ”

Community Survey

Community Experience

This section outlines resources available in respondents' communities, including strengths, challenges, and the types of services needed.

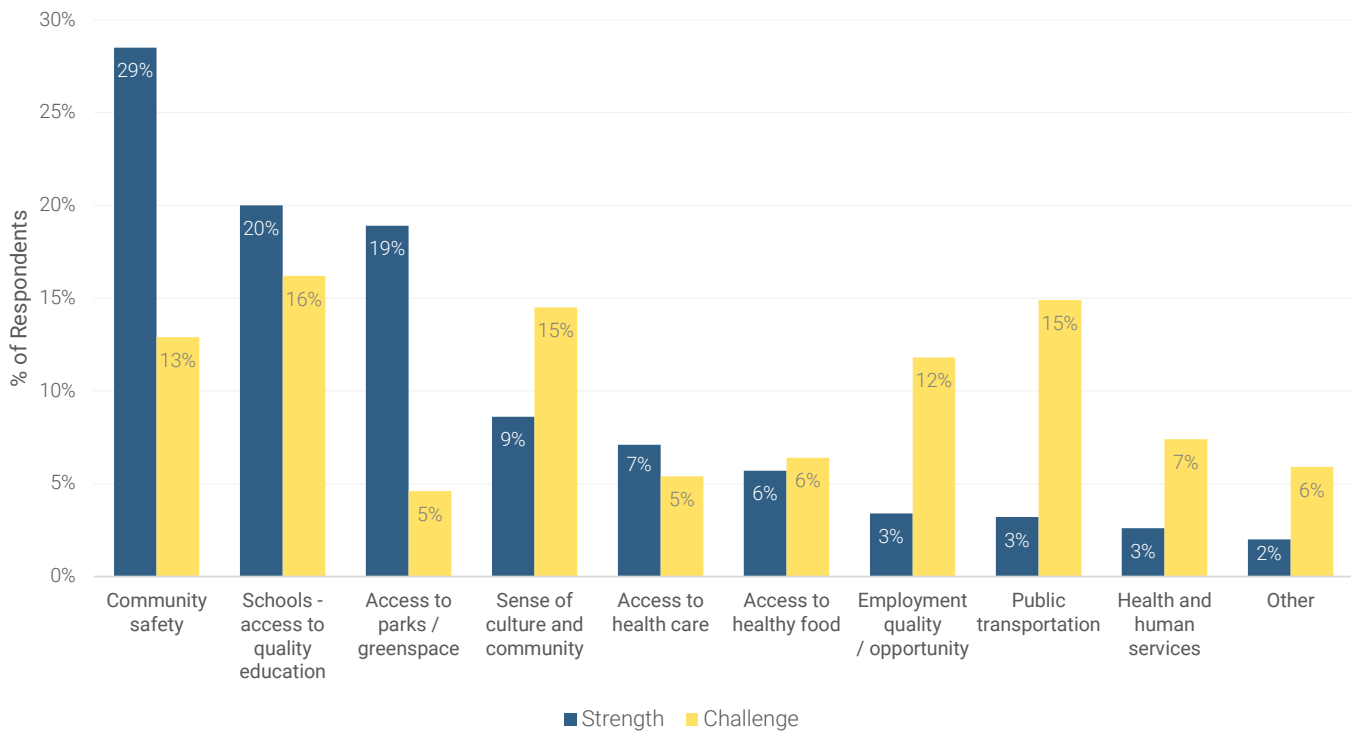
Need more parks and community sports/rec centers for kids

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

There was no majority consensus on strengths and challenges in the communities across SD U-46. While community safety, schools - access to quality education, and access to parks / greenspace were the top strengths, the most chosen option received 29% of responses (below a majority).

Schools - access to quality education was listed both as a **top challenge**, and as within the **top 3 strengths** for the District. This illustrates the disparity of experiences across U-46's many communities.

Community Strengths & Challenges



ACCESS TO SERVICES

The most requested services across SD U-46 communities were **recreational activities / facilities** and **healthier food** options. This trend was consistent across most zipcodes.

In zipcodes 60188 (Carol Stream), 60192 (Hoffman Estates), and 60184 (Wayne), the most requested service was public transportation.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

After the government, schools were listed as the second highest provider of community services.

Community Survey

Free Response Questions

This section summarizes common themes that arose in the survey's free response questions. The quotes below are examples of the **community's suggestions for improvements** that U-46 can make.

1. What would make you feel more welcome at your neighborhood U-46 schools?
2. How can your neighborhood U-46 schools better reflect your immediate community?
3. Are there any general comments, memories, or experiences of U-46 schools that you would like to share?

"equity in my community"

"equal quality in learning opportunities"

"better care of special needs students"

"diverse staff at local schools"

equitable experiences

"mental health support"

"after school programs"

"more volunteering opportunities"

"hands-on counseling and tutoring"

educational support

"better communication with parents"

"more community involvement"

"ways to stay involved"

"more transparency"

communication

"community outreach person in every building"

"partnerships with local businesses"

"needs of students and community first"

community

"more community events"

Community Visioning Workshop

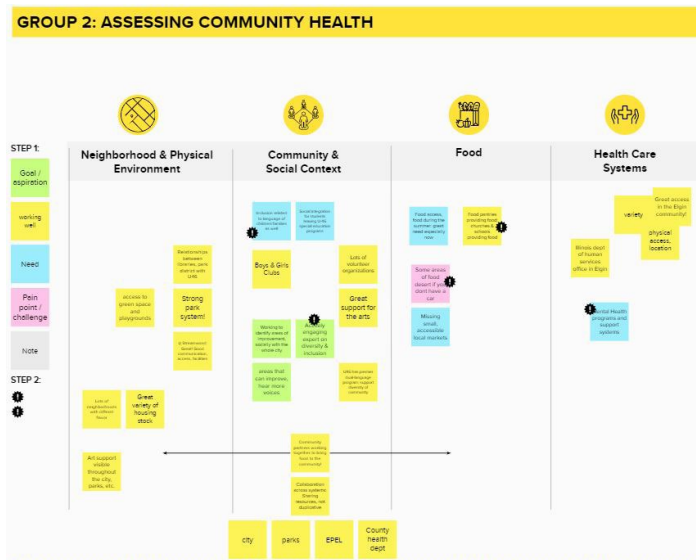
Why this workshop?

To understand current community conditions, define aspirations for your community's future, and determine how U-46 schools can play a role in achieving that vision.

What did the workshop include?

The workshop was conducted virtually during one two-hour session. After a short presentation about the EFMP process and the social determinants of health, participants were broken into three groups to engage in discussions. Activities included **three exercises**:

- 1. Empathy Exercise** - Participants shared about their backgrounds and communities and brainstormed what perspectives were missing from the conversation.
- 2. Assessing Community Health** - Participants investigated how their communities function today, what challenges they face, and what their ideal vision of their communities would be in the future.
- 3. Defining the School's Role in Addressing Community Needs** - Participants brainstormed how U-46 schools could help achieve their community's vision.



Who attended?



COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Alignment Collaborative for Education
- Boys & Girls Club of Elgin
- Childcare Director at Learning Tree
- Spring Street KinderCare
- South Elgin Village Board
- Kids Space
- Elgin Partnership for Early Learning



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & PUBLIC ENTITIES

- Kane County Sheriff's Office
- Elected City Council Member
- Village of Streamwood Trustees
- Poplar Creek Library
- Elgin Public Library
- Gifford Park Association



DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

- Director of School and Community Relations
- U-46 School Board Members
- Communications Manager
- Teachers



PARENT & ADVISORY GROUPS

- Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee
- Community Advisory Council
- Larkin Parent Teacher Organization



COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Community residents from across the district



STUDENTS & ALUMNI

- Students (Elgin, Larkin, South Elgin, Larsen)
- Student advisor to Board of Education
- Recent graduates of SD U-46

Community Visioning Workshop

DLR Group synthesized the feedback from the Community Visioning workshop into key themes for each Social Determinant of Health. Because the Social Determinants of Health are interrelated, certain key themes span multiple categories. The planning team will investigate these ideas for the types of solutions and services that U-46 schools can provide to support broader community needs across the Social Determinants of Health.

MOBILITY + FOOD ACCESS

Public transportation options within the District are limited, making carless families more vulnerable to food deserts in certain areas of the District. *How can the District localize food resources to compensate for limited mobility?*

EMPLOYMENT + CHILDCARE

Limited access to early childhood care and after school programs limits parents' ability to get and keep jobs.

LANGUAGE + COMMUNICATION

The District needs a way to increase representation, inclusion of, and communication with non-English speaking families. Varying levels of familiarity with and access to technology mean that some populations are less able to engage with the District's virtual communication strategies.

FOOD RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Currently, the District and community organizations have forged strong partnerships to provide food to families during the pandemic. *How can this network of community food support continue to provide access after the pandemic?*

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Schools have the opportunity to provide more mental health resources and services to both students and parents. These services are especially needed right now due to the pandemic.

PARENT SUPPORT + INVOLVEMENT

The District can provide more support and training to parents in how to help their children, and navigate District technology.

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Consistent access to special education, increased focus on literacy and math, and consistent access to early childhood education opportunities may help address the achievement gaps across the District.

